

SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT

Countrywide, the number of attacks by the armed opposition has grown by 47% on Q1 2012, challenging the linear logic that the shrinking IMF presence will result in less military determination by the IEA. Instead, the opposition has demonstrated an effective transition to domestic targets while consolidating its position in the East. This increased conflict activity has resulted in NGO staff and projects being impacted in 39 separate incidents this quarter, a 63% increase over Q1 2012, denoting a return to the levels recorded for the equivalent periods in 2011 and 2009. The armed opposition authored 20 NGO incidents, while 11 were caused by pro-Government forces (ANSF, IMF) and 8 by criminals. This authorship pattern indicates that incidents caused by combatants (AOG, ANSF, IMF) have increased by 158% over Q1 2012 as criminality has dropped by one third, though it has remained stable in urban areas. The sole case of kidnap for ransom of an NGO worker by criminals in Kabul city highlights the ambient -although statistically limited- risks of urban criminality.

We assess that 35% of all the NGO incidents attributed to the armed opposition were accidental & collateral in nature; coincidentally matching those categorized as AOG 'effect-based' operations, or those not intended to create serious loss or harm, such as verbal threats, 'warning IEDs' and abductions. Attacks assessed as deliberate & hostile contributed a further 20%. In total, six incidents led to NGO casualties (3 staff killed, 6 injured); all of these attributed to the armed opposition rather than to criminals who had been responsible for all 5 casualties in Q1 2012. Save one NGO member murdered in Helmand during an abduction attempt, all NGO deaths and injuries this quarter resulted from exposure to well established features of the conflict; indiscriminate road-side IEDs in rural settings, suicide attacks on ANSF-GOA installations in urban centers, and combat related small arms fire. In addition to an **increased exposure to conflict related AOG violence**, NGOs have also been subjected to a sharp **increase in ANSF-IMF intrusions**; from 3 cases in Q1 2012 to 11 this year. This included 6 arrest operations, 2 breaches into NGO clinics during operations and 3 cases classified as 'abuse of power'. That most of these impacted NGO health projects in the East and Central provides the first reliable indicator on the impact of the security transition process on NGO safety in the field.

With a negotiated solution far from the horizon, and the key question of a sustainable military balance (the ANSF ability to compensate for the ever shrinking IMF presence) remaining to be answered, the opening dynamics of 2013 all indicate the likelihood of a return to 2011 levels of violence. Though grim, this assessment only represents a further escalation in **the perpetual stalemate** that has come to characterize the conflict. It also highlights the NGO communities continued need for reducing their proximity to security targets, and negotiation with the combatants in regards to both access and the respect of humanitarian space. While acknowledging the challenges that this advice encompasses in a context where the conflict deteriorates, the actors change, and their command&control structures display growing signs of instability, we believe that this still remains the road forward for 2013 and beyond.

Tomas Muzik, ANSO Director,

Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2013.

The views expressed in this report remain the sole responsibility of the author.

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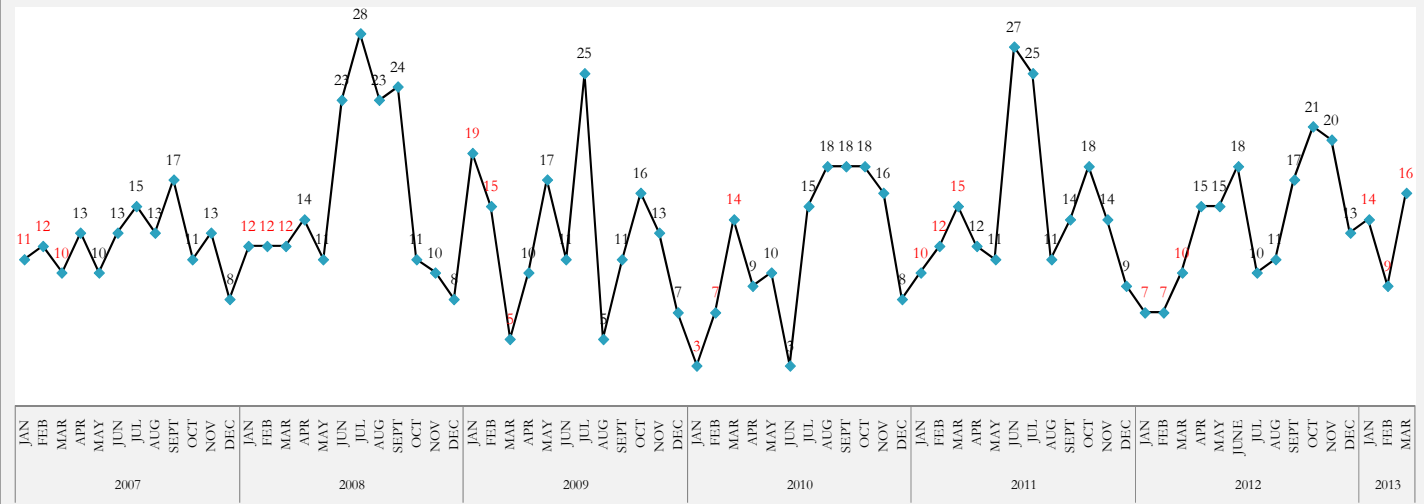
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
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Part 1.

NGO Trends

1.1 General NGO Incident Trends

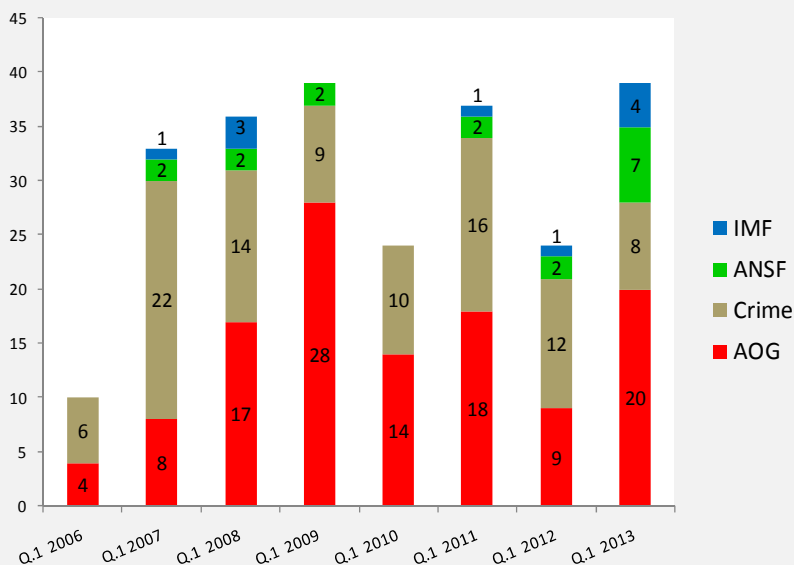
ANSO: Total NGO security incidents, all authors, countrywide, by month 2007-2013 (Jan-Mar values highlighted in red)



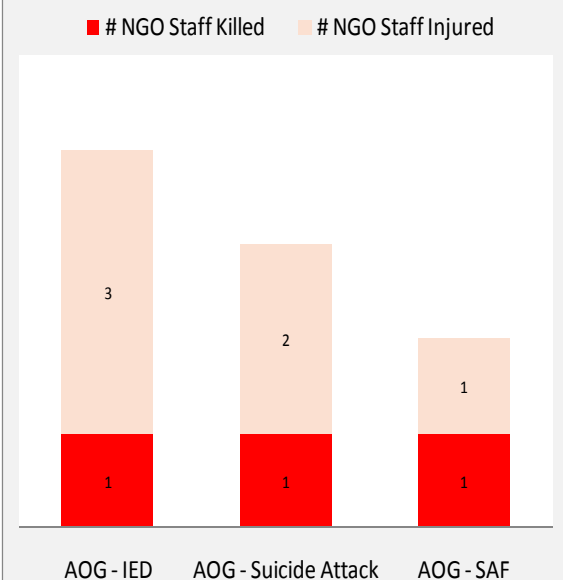
With 39 NGO security incidents, Q1 2013 totals matched those recorded for the equivalent periods in 2011 and 2009 (*charts above and below left*) and equals the highest volumes yet recorded. The combatants (AOG, ANSF, IMF) authored a combined 79% of NGO incidents this quarter, with half pertaining to AOG activity alone. In contrast to the five NGO casualties recorded at Q1 2012 (all in criminal attacks), NGO casualty numbers have increased this period. All nine casualties, from six distinct cases, have resulted from AOG violence (*below right*), though in two thirds of the cases they are assessed as collateral or accidental (*see page 4*). ‘Victim-operated’ IEDs in rural areas (Surobi, Char Chino) and suicide attacks on high-profile GOA/ANSF targets in population centers (Kabul City, Spin Boldak) are the leading cause of NGO deaths and injuries.

The quarterly data suggests **that 2013 has marked a return to an increased level of NGO exposure to the conflict**, not dissimilar to the levels witnessed during 2011. However, the comparison of 2011 and 2013 quarterly data also shows that NGOs have become more susceptible to ANSF/IMF operations (in particular in East and Central) while the impact of criminality has decreased country-wide. We assess that the trend of NGO exposure to re-ignited conflict activity, driven by growing AOG attack volumes and seconded by more frequent ANSF/IMF interference with NGO staff and projects, will remain the dominant NGO security patterns throughout the year.

ANSO: NGO incidents at Q.1, comparison by year and author

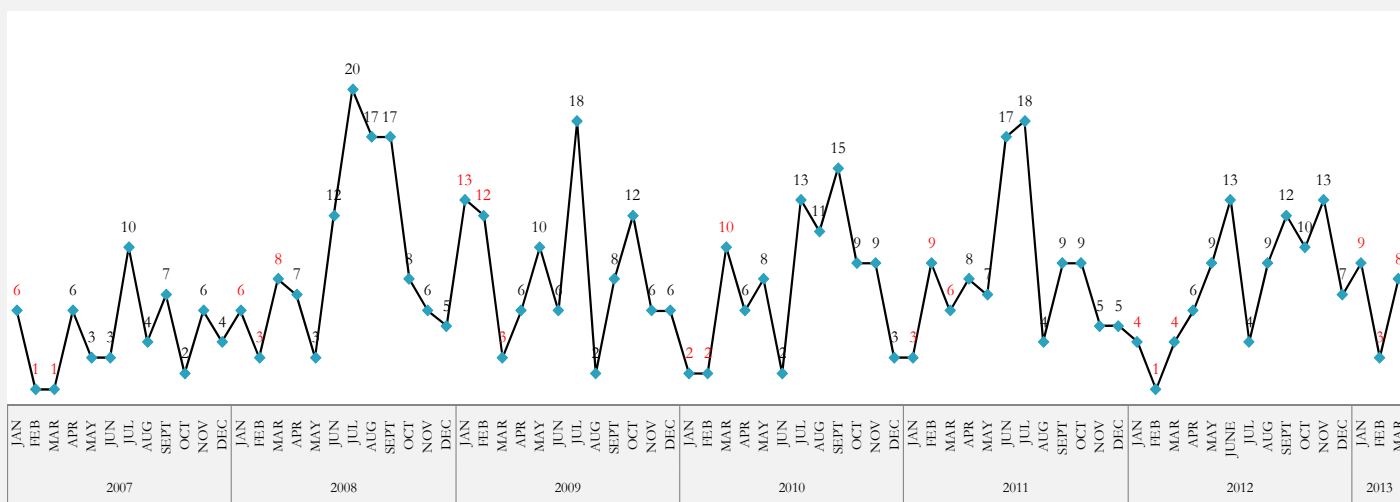


ANSO: NGO Staff killed/injured in Q.1 2013



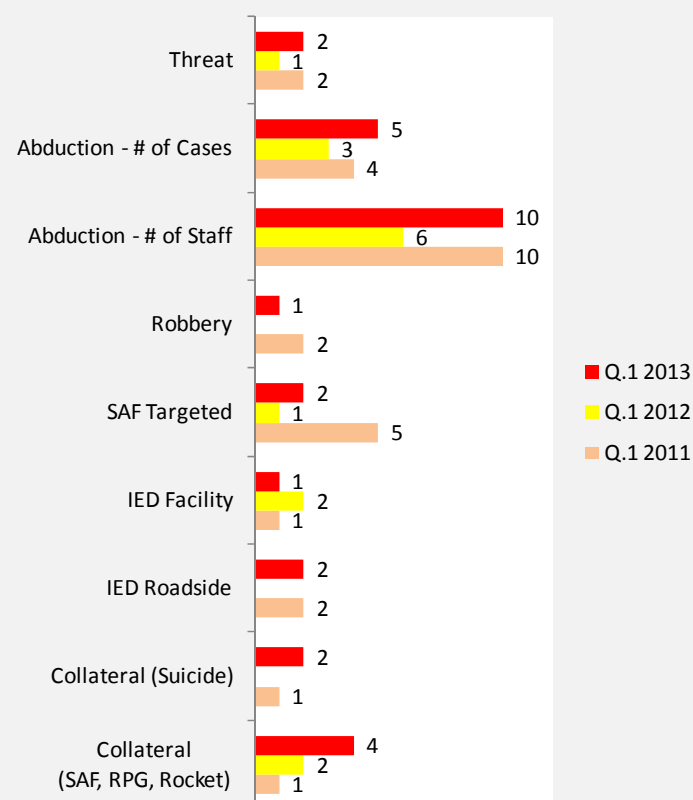
1.2 NGO Incidents Initiated by AOG

ANSO: NGO Incidents initiated by AOG, 2007-2013, all types, by month, (Jan-Mar values highlighted in red)



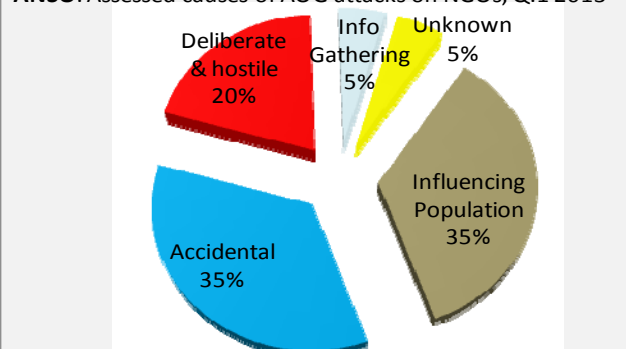
AOG attacks on NGOs spiked from the five-year low recorded in the first quarter last year (9 incidents) to slightly above the levels seen in 2011 (20 in Q1 2013 vs 18 in Q1 2011, *chart above*). The comparison of NGO incident data by type (below *left*) suggests that despite most incident types being consistent with the trends of 2011, **there has been a discernable growth in NGO exposure to collateral impacts over the last two years**; a development which continues to impact NGOs in East, Central and South regions.

ANSO: AOG-initiated NGO incidents by type comparison Q.1 2011- Q.1 2013



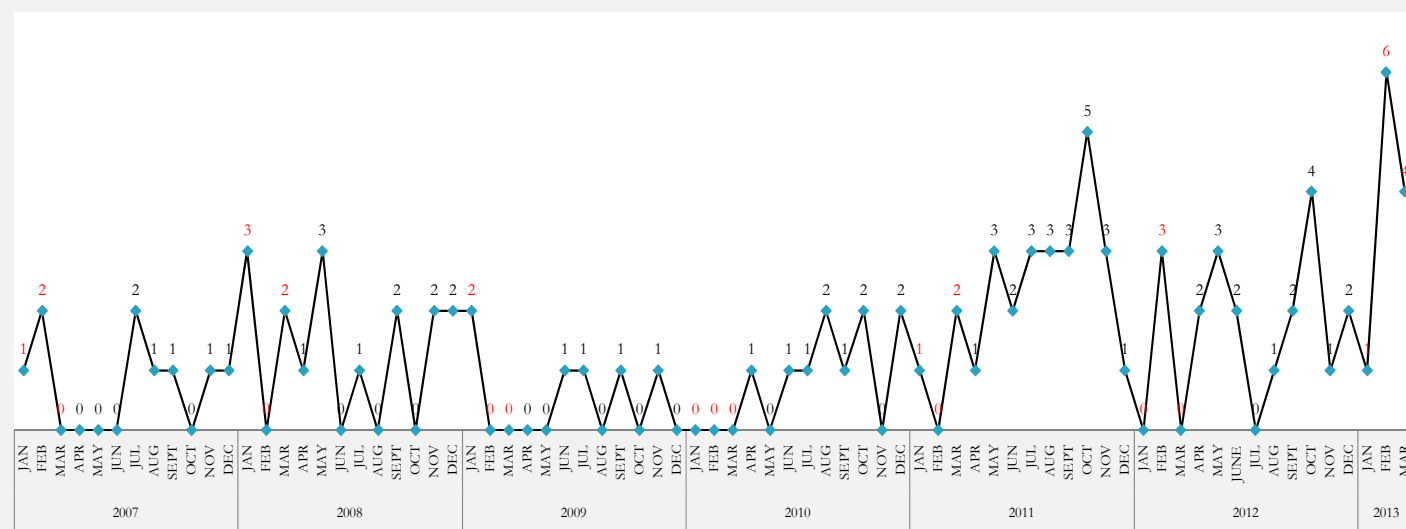
Just 20% of the incident total are assessed as being deliberately intended to cause loss or harm (*below right*, compared with 35% in Q1 2011) whilst accidental/collateral incidents (most commonly IEDs or indirect fire) and AOG efforts aimed at influencing population (including 3 out of 5 abductions and such kinetic threats as 'warning' IEDs) made up the majority of AOG incidents. The proportion of 'influence-based' operations increased from 18% in 2011 to 35% this year, a development most visible in Faryab but indicative of a country-wide shift in AOG operational focus. Overall, the data continues to provide no evidence of systematic or routine targeting of NGOs by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

ANSO: Assessed causes of AOG attacks on NGOs, Q.1 2013

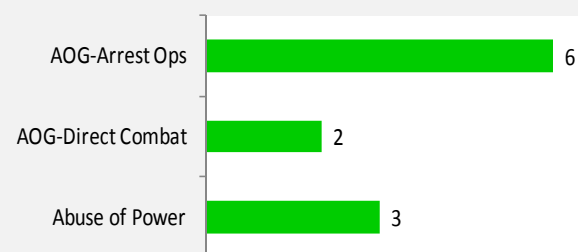


1.3 NGO Incidents Caused by ANSF- IMF

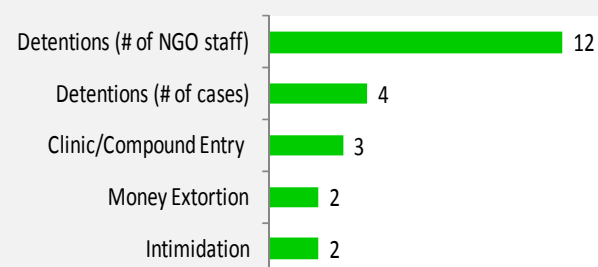
ANSO: NGO security incidents initiated by ANSF & IMF, all types, 2007-2013 (Jan-Mar values highlighted in red)



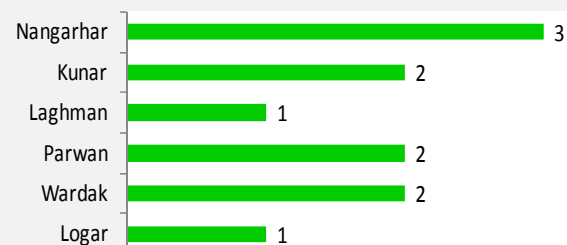
ANSO: Assessed cause/purpose of NGO incidents by ANSF-IMF in Q.1 2013



ANSO: Type of NGO incidents by ANSF-IMF Q.1 2013



ANSO: Location of NGO incidents by ANSF-IMF Q.1 2013



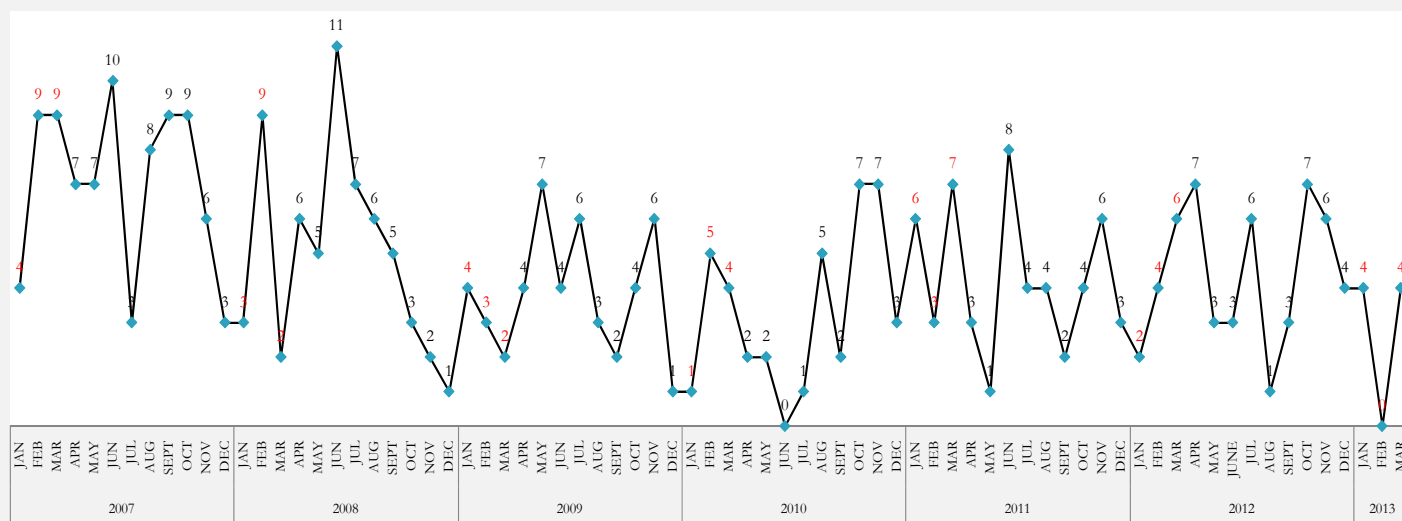
There has been an important increase in the number of NGO incidents caused by the pro-Government security forces (either ANSF or joint IMF/ANSF units), rising from 3 in Q1 2012 to 11 this quarter, a volume equal to half that recorded over all of 2012 (*above*).

Anti-AOG operations, in particular search ops, as well as clinic occupations by expeditionary combat forces are assessed as the leading causes of ANSF-IMF intrusions (*first chart left*). The NGO medical sector has indeed absorbed most of this activity. Out of 8 individual humanitarian organizations impacted throughout the 11 incidents, 5 agencies provide health care services in the East and Central regions. In 4 cases, IMF units were present alongside ANSF, but a larger proportion (7) were independent ANSF actions, including an outlier case of ANA members intimidating a medical doctor for their personal benefit in Wardak as well as 2 events of ALP extorting 'transit fees' at roadside check-points in the Ghorband valley of Parwan. None of these, however, resulted in NGO deaths or injuries.

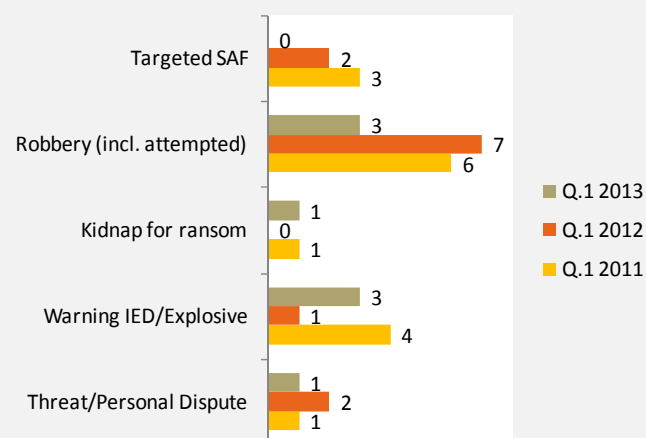
Detentions of NGO staff were the most frequent type of incident, with 2 out of 3 project site entries also including detentions of staff and beneficiaries (*middle left*). Out of 12 staff detained (compare with 1 in Q1 2012 and 5 in Q2 2011), 11 were released whilst in one case, the arrested staff member remains in custody. The distribution patterns (*bottom left*) suggest that NGOs operating in Transition Tranche IV-V provinces in East and Central are the most likely to encounter ANSF-IMF intrusions going forward with Nangarhar, Kunar and Wardak being the key provinces to monitor (*see also p.12*).

1.4 Criminal Attacks on NGOs

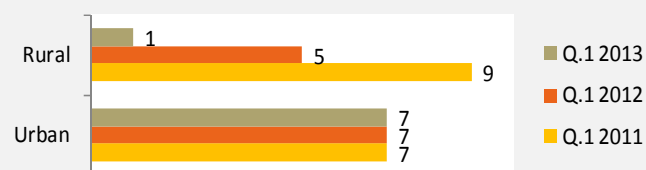
ANSO: NGO security incidents initiated by criminals, 2007-2013, all types, by month, (Jan-Mar values highlighted in red)



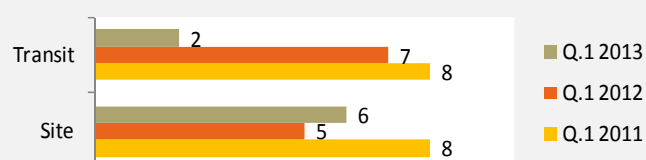
ANSO: Criminal attacks on NGOs by type comparison Q.1 2011- Q.1 2013



ANSO: Comparison of criminal attacks on NGOs rural/urban, all types



ANSO: Comparison of criminal attacks on NGOs transit/site, all types



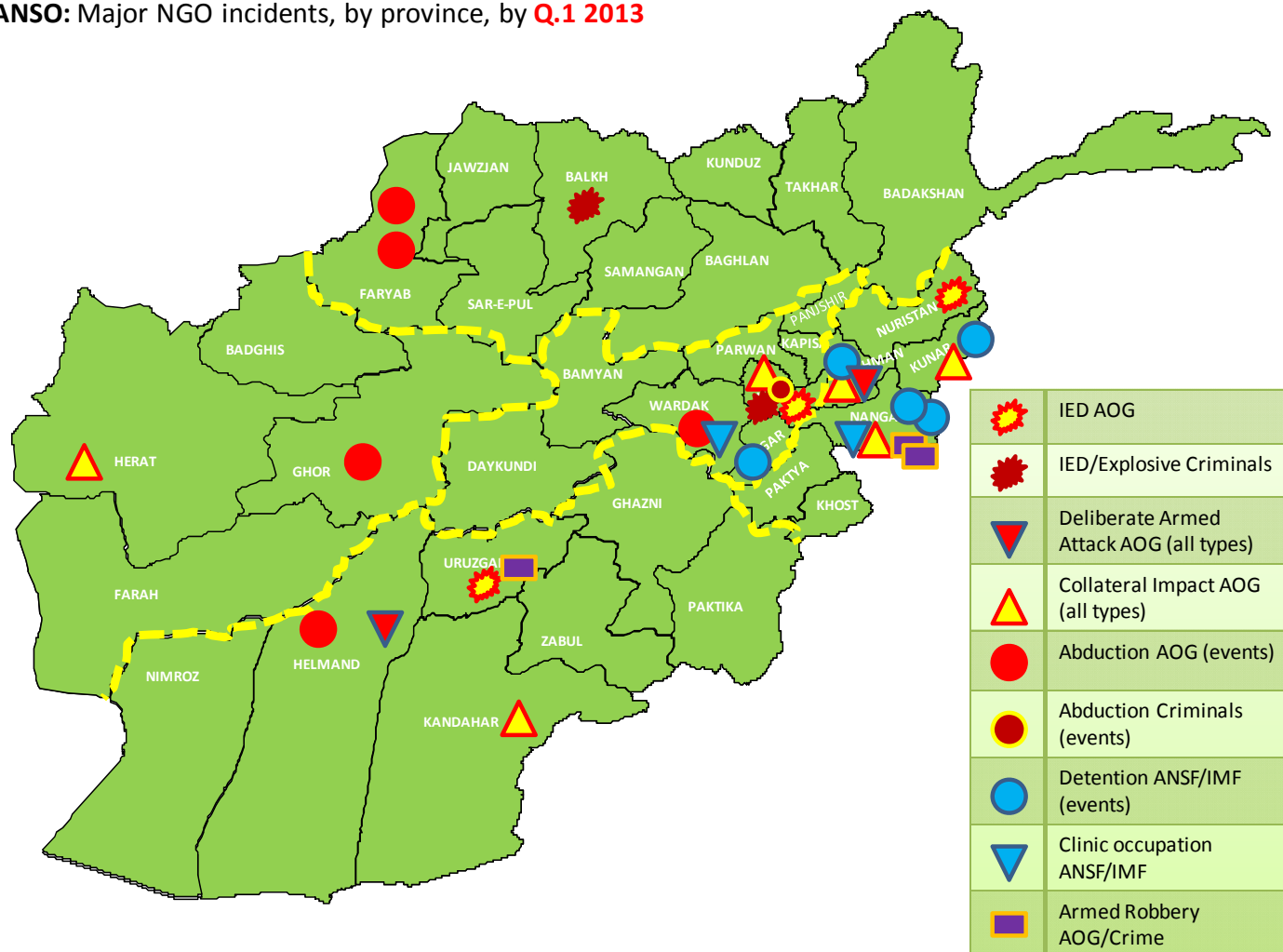
Whilst country-wide criminality patterns have not altered significantly from last year (marking a slight 6% increase), NGO exposure to crime has been dropping since Q1 2011; from 16 incidents to the current 8 this quarter (*above*). This contrasts with the growing number of NGO incidents authored by conflict parties over the same period.

This year has so far remained devoid of crime-related NGO casualties, as opposed to three NGO casualties in criminal escalations in Q1 2011 and five last year. Although extracting conclusions may be premature given the small data sample so far this year, ANSO assesses that the current record is at least partially due to the successful implementation of risk mitigation strategies by NGOs, both when it comes to acceptance-based issues (including personal disputes) as well as in relation to financially motivated criminality. NGOs have been able to reduce their exposure to armed robberies and thefts as well as to avoid escalations leading to targeted attacks with the use of firearms (*second chart left*).

Unpacking the context of NGO criminal cases, there is a visible decrease of rural criminality (all types) as opposed to urban centers where the level of NGO exposure has not altered (*third chart left*). Kabul City featured prominently in this category, including a single case of kidnap for ransom, and three cases of intimidation of which two resulted in warning explosive devices being used against NGO premises. Meanwhile, criminal attacks and intimidations occurring at NGO sites remained mostly stable and were three times more frequent than criminality in transit which has decreased (*bottom left*).

1.5 Mapping of Serious NGO Incidents - Q.1 2013

ANSO: Major NGO incidents, by province, by **Q.1 2013**



The mapping of serious NGO incidents this quarter highlights the overlap of **the intensified conflict activity in the East and parts of Central** with the dense NGO population there. The breakdown of NGO casualties reinforces the assessment that the core risks in the two regions remain linked to AOG attacks (*right*). However, **the spate of NGO incidents caused by ANSF-IMF along the Wardak-Nuristan axis** - including 2 protracted ANSF/IMF occupations of NGO clinics in Wardak and Nangarhar - is a new development of concern as it represents a visible impact of the 'security transition' on NGO safety in the field. We assess that the increased pace of ANSF-IMF operations in Tranche IV-V areas will remain a key NGO risk vector during the upcoming months.

Serious NGO incidents have also grown in the South (from 2 at Q.1 2011 and 1 at Q.1 2012 to 5 this quarter). As is typical in the region, although the overall volume remained low (mainly due to a light NGO footprint) a significant proportion of the incidents on record resulted in NGO casualties including all the NGO deaths this quarter.

ANSO: NGO Casualties in Q.1 2013

■ # Staff Killed ■ # Staff Injured

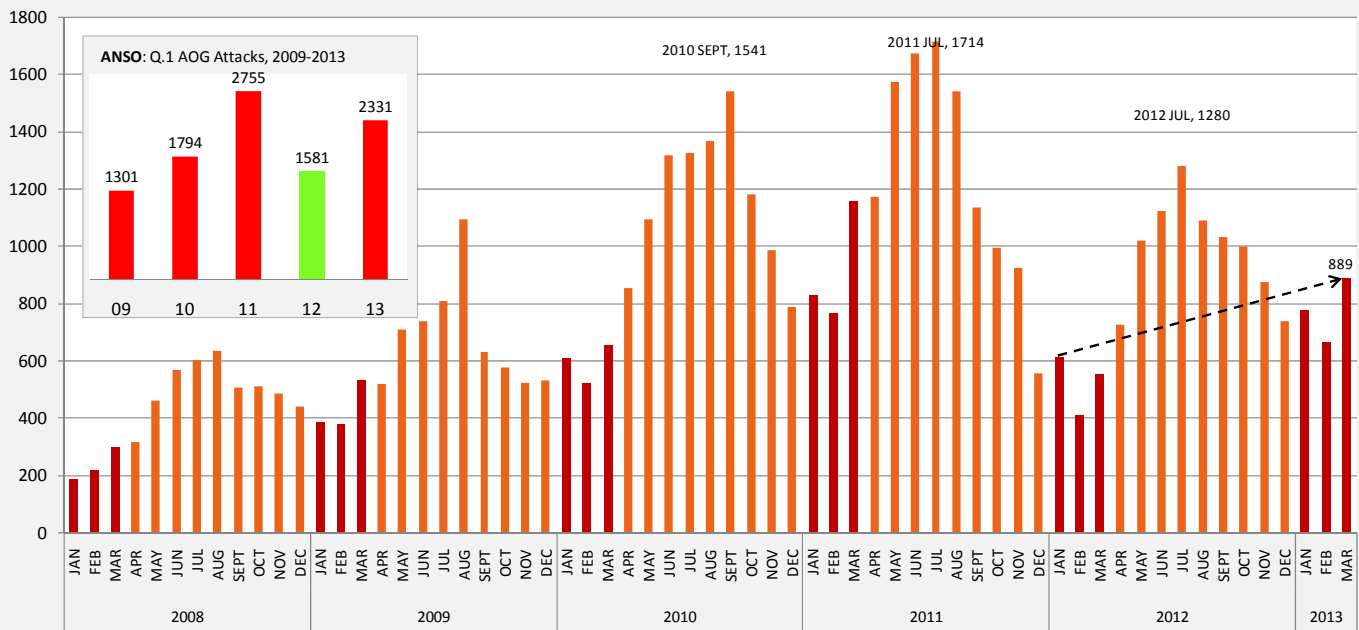
BBIED in Spin Boldak (Kandahar)	1
Murder in Kajaki (Helmand)	1
IED in Char Chino (Uruzgan)	1
SAF on ambulance in Alingar (Laghman)	1
Suicide CPX in Kabul	2
IED in Surobi (Kabul)	3

Part 2.

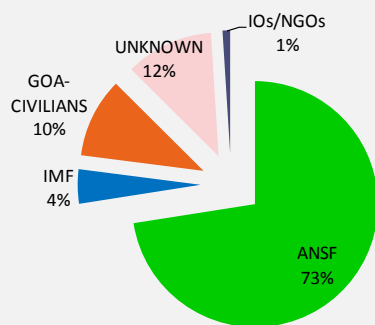
State of the Conflict

2.1 Armed Opposition Group (AOG) Activity

ANSO: AOG attacks, countrywide, 2008-2013 (includes only IED, SAF, IDF and suicide attacks)

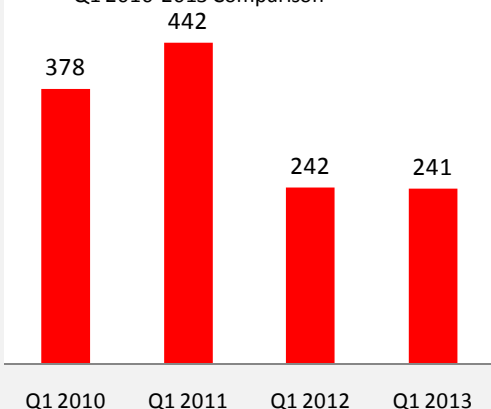


ANSO: Assessed Targets of AOG Attacks at Q.1 2013



AOG initiated attacks have soared this quarter, up by 47% from Q1 last year, with the incident total also surpassing the volumes recorded in 2010 by 30% (2331 this year vs. 1794 in 2010, *above*). Given the stability of the seasonal conflict pattern each year so far (a winter low and summer spike), we assess that the current re-escalation trend will be preserved throughout the entire season and that 2013 is set to become the second most violent year after 2011. The incident volumes also confirm that the downturn noted last year was not reflective of a permanently degraded AOG capability, but rather linked to the opposition adopting an operational pause - perhaps linked to the harsh 2011-2012 winter - which has since come to an end.

ANSO: # of Civilian Deaths in AOG Attacks, Q1 2010-2013 Comparison



What has been maintained in the AOG campaign this year, however, is the conscious shift from IMF to Afghan targets, as the conflict adopts an increasingly domestic shape. As of this quarter, 73% of all incidents caused by AOG (incl. armed attacks and non-kinetic activity) targeted the expanding ANSF whereas an additional 10% involved civilians associated, or perceived to be associated, with the Government (*middle left*). This pattern challenges the linear logic that the shrinking IMF presence would equal a decreased appetite, or ability, to prosecute the conflict on the AOG side. In counter-point, despite the current AOG efforts, the number of civilian deaths at Q1 (*bottom left, data indicative only*) appears very consistent with the volume recorded last year. Whether this holds true as the season progresses is yet to be seen.

2.2 AOG Incident Volume Comparison

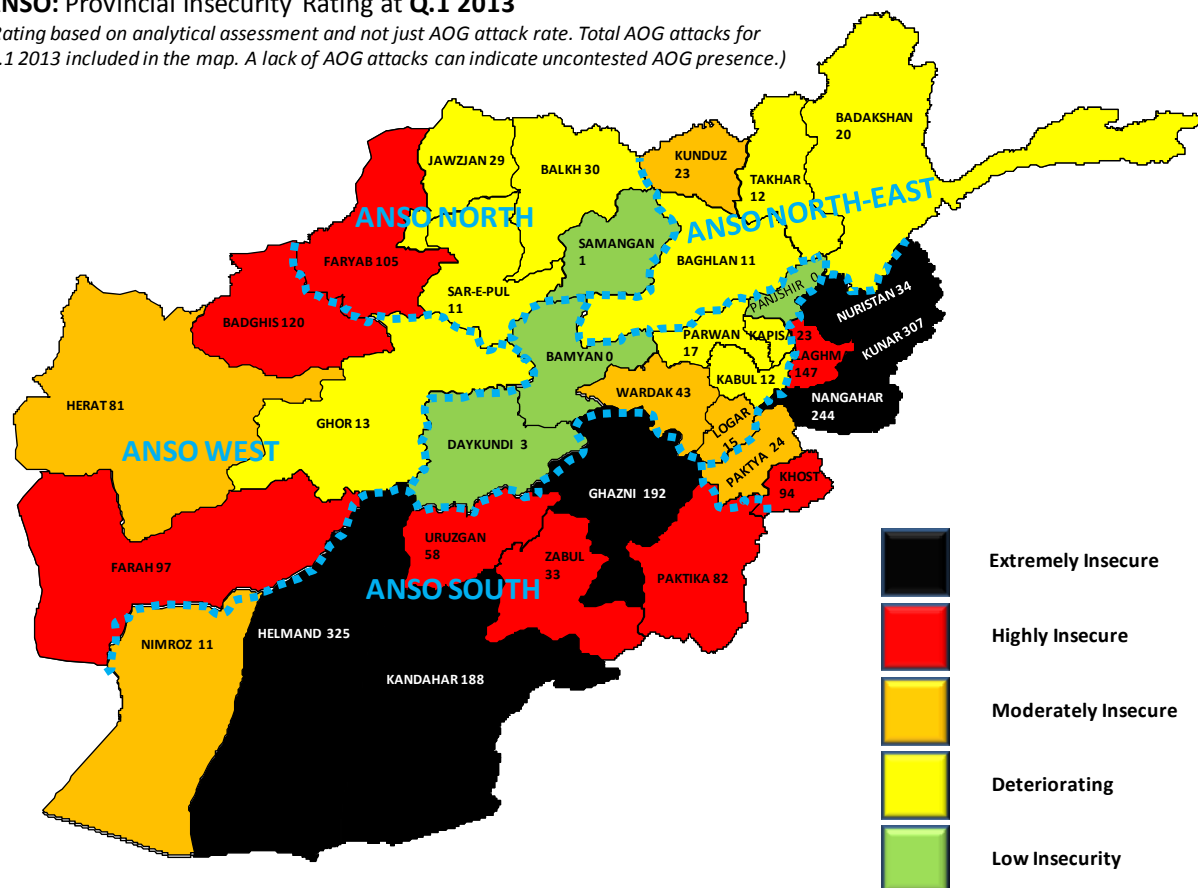
This table provides a comparison of raw AOG incident data (all types of kinetic and non-kinetic events) per province for the Q1 periods 2011-2013. It shows the percentage change over the last two years' first quarters and the absolute figure. The 'average' referred to is the 47% country rate. When using for independent analysis, readers are reminded that a low incident volume can indicate AOG dominance and that a small absolute change can be large when stated as a percentage.

PROVINCE	AOG INCIDENTS Q1 2011	AOG INCIDENTS Q1 2012	AOG INCIDENTS Q1 2013	% CHANGE 2012/2013	ACTUAL CHANGE 2012/2013	
Kabul	22	2	12	500%	10	ABOVE AVERAGE GROWTH
Laghman	32	42	147	250%	105	
Parwan	15	5	17	240%	12	
Takhar	5	4	12	200%	8	
Daykundi	7	1	3	200%	2	
Wardak	43	15	43	187%	28	
Badakhshan	11	7	20	186%	13	
Jawzjan	33	12	29	142%	17	
Helmand	672	143	325	127%	182	
Nuristan	21	16	34	113%	18	
Herat	58	40	81	103%	41	
Ghazni	152	96	192	100%	96	
Balkh	31	16	30	88%	14	
Ghor	3	7	13	86%	6	
Faryab	55	57	105	84%	48	
Nangarhar	128	135	244	81%	109	
Kunduz	46	13	23	77%	10	
Badghis	97	73	120	64%	47	
Zabul	55	22	33	50%	11	BELOW AVERAGE GROWTH
Paktya	140	16	24	50%	8	
Farah	58	71	97	37%	26	
Kunar	338	254	307	21%	53	
Kandahar	249	161	188	17%	27	
Nimroz	14	10	11	10%	1	NEGATIVE GROWTH
Sar-e Pul	19	10	11	10%	1	
Panjshir	0	0	0	0%	0	
Paktika	48	91	82	-10%	-9	
Uruzgan	93	66	58	-12%	-8	
Logar	23	20	15	-25%	-5	
Baghlan	16	15	11	-27%	-4	
Kapisa	19	38	23	-39%	-15	
Khost	326	188	94	-50%	-94	
Samangan	2	2	1	-50%	-1	
Bamyan	0	2	0	-100%	-2	

2.3 AOG Attacks Per Province - Insecurity Rating

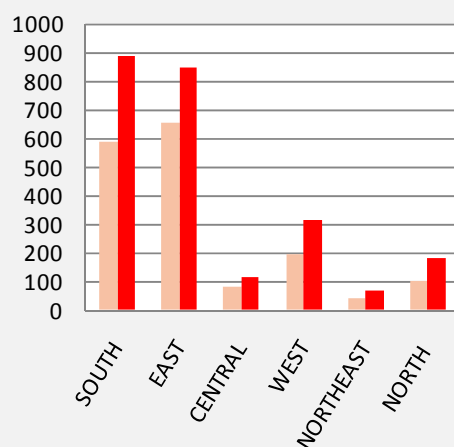
ANSO: Provincial Insecurity Rating at Q.1 2013

(Rating based on analytical assessment and not just AOG attack rate. Total AOG attacks for Q.1 2013 included in the map. A lack of AOG attacks can indicate uncontested AOG presence.)



ANSO: Comparison of AOG total volumes at Q.1, by region

Q.1 2012 Q.1 2013



Border provinces in South, East and West regions have driven a country-wide escalation this quarter (*chart left & map above*). In the East, Nangarhar (+81%) and Laghman (+250%) have reached 'gain margins' of over 100 attacks on Q1 last year, indicating both the mature nature of this front and the IEA Peshawar Shura's success in consolidating their gains in the northern tier of their AOR. Of the entire AfPak border belt, only Khost noted a significant actual & percentage decrease (-50%), but remains strongly anchored within the IEA Miramshah Shura's sphere of influence. The surrounding provinces - Wardak, Logar and Paktia - are rated 'moderately insecure' due to unimpeded AOG access combined with a high likelihood of intensified conflict as the IMF exit approaches. The attack rates in Ghazni (+127%), Helmand (+100%) and Kandahar (+17%) have driven growth in South, where 6 out of 7 provinces are ranked as 'highly insecure' or above, leaving Nimroz as slightly more accessible. In Helmand and Ghazni, the conflict has been nurtured by the aggressive ISAF posture ahead of their final 'fighting' season, whilst in both provinces the IEA leadership struggles with increasingly fragmented command & control structures.

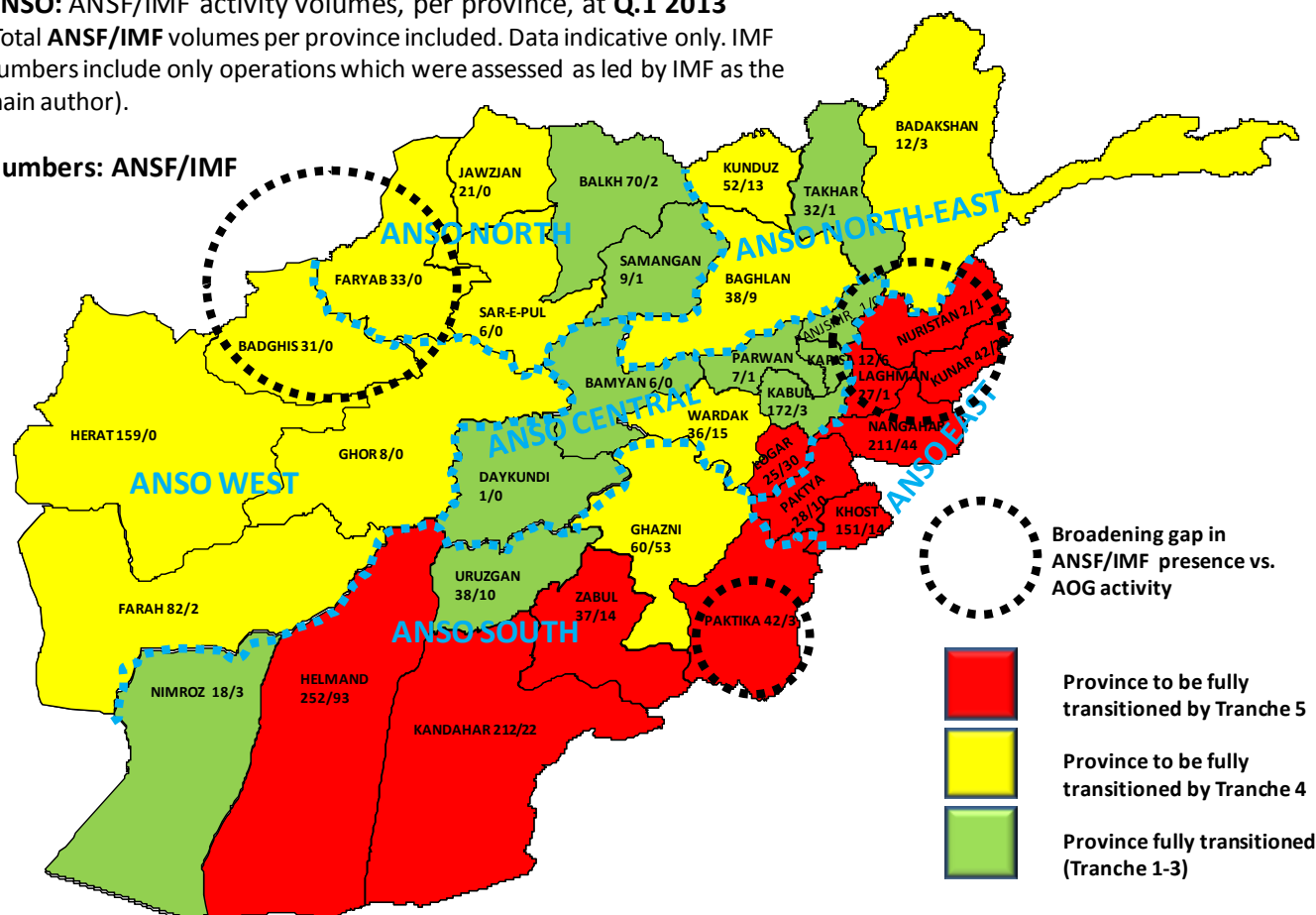
The entire border axis in the West (Farah to Faryab) constitutes the most tangible example of AOG successfully filling a gap created by IMF withdrawal. The four provinces averaged a 72% growth rate on Q1 2012, all of them also exceeding the volumes recorded at Q1 2011 - the country's most violent year to date. In the North, Kunduz is the only province rated 'moderately insecure', due to a high volume of IMF offensive operations (airstrikes in particular), growing AOG attack rates, and the projection of force by local militias that commonly operate with limited oversight from any recognized authority.

2.4 ANSF-IMF Activity - Provincial Mapping

ANSO: ANSF/IMF activity volumes, per province, at Q.1 2013

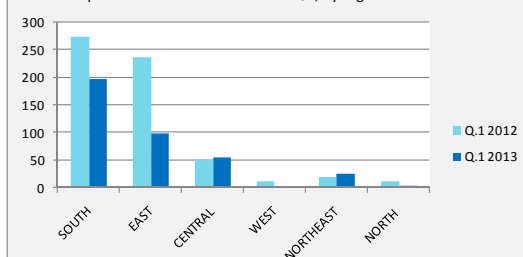
(Total **ANSF/IMF** volumes per province included. Data indicative only. IMF numbers include only operations which were assessed as led by IMF as the main author).

Numbers: ANSF/IMF

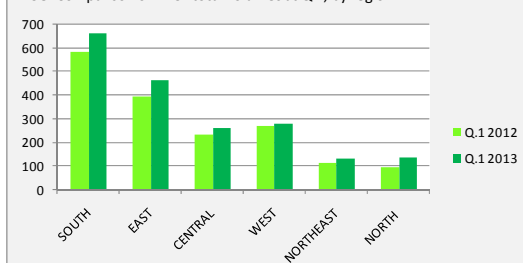


Actual Change Q1 2012/Q1 2013 (# incidents)			
Province	AOG	ANSF	IMF
Badghis	+47	-16	-5
Faryab	+48	+3	-5
Laghman	+105	+5	-6
Nangarhar	+109	+33	-13
Nuristan	+18	-2	0
Kunar	+53	+14	+10
Paktika	-9	+10	-33

ANSO: Comparison of IMF total volumes at Q.1, by region



ANSO: Comparison of ANSF total volumes at Q.1, by region



Even while accepting the inherent visibility and data limitations regarding ANSF/IMF activity, this information nonetheless provides insight on broader trends. The map above provides a comparison of ANSF/IMF data (all incident types) per province against the context of the transition process. The table left specifies actual increases/decreases in incident volumes (incident totals by author at Q1 2013 minus Q1 2012) for the areas where broadening AOG vs. IMF/ANSF gaps are identified. Entering Tranche 4, overall figures for operations attributed to IMF continues to drop in South, East and West (*charts left*), though the ANSF appears to be expanding in some of the most contested provinces where IMF remains very active (such as Tranche 5 - Helmand, Kandahar, and Nangarhar).

A 'successful' transition, however, should demonstrate ANSF ability or willingness to fill broadening security gaps in contested provinces which host a significant AOG footprint and are no longer a key operational focus for IMF, rather than only in those where IMF remains present or in key regional urban centers (i.e. Kabul, Herat, Balkh). Activity mapping at Q1 shows that this is not the case in Faryab, Badghis, the entire northern tier of East and Paktika (a key infiltration route by AOG). Until the ANSF demonstrates an ability to 'hold' deteriorating provinces where they stand alone, they cannot be viewed as successfully filling the gap left by IMF.

Acronyms:

AOG - Armed Opposition Groups specifically Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban); Haqqani Network and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbiddin (HIG)

IEA - Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban)

ALP - Afghan Local Police

IMF - International Military Forces (specifically ISAF, USFOR-A, PRTs and SOF)

ANSF - Afghan National Security Forces (mostly Police & Army)

IED - Improvised Explosive Device (home made bomb)

IDF - Indirect Fire (rockets, mortars)

CAS - Close Air Support (airstrike)

SAF - Small Arms Fire (from a machine gun such as AK-47)

RPG - Rocket Propelled Grenade

ANSO REGIONS

For the purposes of this report, please note the following breakdown of provinces for the various ANSO Regions:

CENTRAL: Bamyan, Daykundi, Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Panjshir, Parwan, Wardak

EAST: Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktya

SOUTH: Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Paktika, Uruzgan, Zabul

NORTH: Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sar-e Pul

NORTHEAST: Badakhshan, Baghlan, Takhar, Kunduz

WEST: Ghor, Badghis, Farah, Herat

REPORT ENDS

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